

Tentage Case Study Sample

Situation:

The "Tentage Team" at the Defense Personnel Support Center (DPSC), Philadelphia, PA. The team was established in early 1995 to better respond to rapidly increasing demands for military tentage. Contingency operations in Desert Shield/Desert Storm had severely depleted US war reserve tentage stocks. Demands from hurricane Andrew, Somalia, Haitian refugee relief, and impending deployments to Bosnia threatened to completely drain stocks in spite of industry being near peak capacity for military specification replacements.

Response:

Strong market surveillance program and up-to-date database of commercial capabilities. Needed to determine the characteristics of disaster relief, which might allow DPSC and the user to relax some of the MilSpec requirements in order to obtain commercial sources to meet urgent needs (such as snow/wind capabilities, color, etc.). The tentage team met, identified these characteristics, and conducted necessary trade-offs to still meet most of the customer needs. With the existing database of capabilities, the tentage team was able to rapidly generate a one-page performance specification for urgent relief requirements. This specification was sent to commercial sources and price quotes obtained for their commercial products the following day. Three contracts were awarded in order to meet delivery demands (one of the suppliers was also a new source for Defense Department business). The commercial tents met most of the MilSpec requirements at about one-half the price.

Lessons Learned:

1. Active market surveillance program
2. Good data base
3. Determine critical needs
4. Tailoring
5. One page performance specification
6. Empowered Team
7. Supportive management.

Solicited and awarded multiple contracts all within five working days despite challenges like:

- the customer had no idea how many people needed support (numbers grew every day);
- technical personnel had to determine minimum requirements, industry capabilities, and trade-offs; and
- contracting had to put everything together in the contracts, management had to approve funding without firm requirement.